documented in her earlier study of the 25,000ers. Only at the very end of the book (p. 239) does Viola acknowledge that these processes tied village and town together more than ever before.

Nonetheless, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin* is a fundamental study that brings together a wide array of sources to shed light on a neglected but crucially important aspect of Soviet history. The evidence that it presents and the issues that it raises should keep scholars working for a long time on the public and hidden histories of collectivization.

Mark B. Tauger  
West Virginia University


Robert Thurston and Vadim Rogovin use extensive published and archival sources to provide a reassessment of the years that many consider to be the most repressive in Soviet history. Common to both works are a diversity of sources, a variety of voices that is heard throughout, and more than a few surprises. These archival details are enormously valuable and interesting. Nonetheless, there is more than a continent separating the interpretations of Thurston and Rogovin. Probably the most striking difference between these two works is that the authors disagree on the role of Stalin in the repressive campaign of the late 1930s. For Rogovin, the purges were Stalin's effort to deal with mounting dissent within the country and to eliminate potentially dangerous opponents within both the party and the military. He claims that mass discontent inspired the party opposition and also formed the basis of the military opposition, for "the commanders and political personnel to a certain degree reflected the dissatisfaction of the peasantry, from whom the rank-and-file soldiers in the army were largely drawn." (p. 401) Assertions such as these regarding the role of the masses are significant, but disappointing too because they are often not sufficiently supported or developed.

Rogovin's main argument is that Stalin needed to exterminate the communist opposition, "to blame the economic disasters, disproportions, and miscalculations" caused by his First Five-Year Plan policies on the "sabotage" of Trotskyists (p. 86) in order to preserve his unlimited control over the party. According to Rogovin, Stalin's fear of internal opposition was not simply the result of his paranoid and bizarre pathology, but was actually justified: there were political battles being fought, there was opposition to Stalin within the party, there was popular discontent and resistance to his policies. Thus to protect himself from being the obvious target of this discontent, Stalin managed to transfer people's dissatisfaction and distrust one rank lower and invent sabotage by the People's Commissars, directors and engineers. In sharp contrast
to this interpretation, Thurston claims that "there was little connection between collectivization or modernization and the Terror." (p. 134)

More failed Stalinist policies bred more discontent which led in turn to the widening of the terror, according to Rogovin. In other words, a vicious cycle developed. The failed policies of the First Five-Year Plan generated opposition which in turn led to the repressions of the late 1930s, and the injustice of these repressions generated even more opposition and in turn an even greater need to suppress dissenting voices through an ever intensifying terror. The arrests of the late 1930s, then, were Stalin's response to the very real opposition that his failed policies consistently generated.

Thurston's work is markedly different from Rogovin's on a number of key points, but particularly on the role of Stalin. While Thurston claims that Stalin bears the ultimate responsibility for creating a climate which called for the hunting of enemies, he seems to place most of the blame on Ezhov. The NKVD fabricated cases and tortured people not targeted in Stalin's directives, sending the General Secretary constant reports about the unmasking of enemies which caused Stalin to call for further arrests because he feared that many enemies were still at large. Stalin believed reports of treason, so when the NKVD sent him reports about the unmasking of saboteurs, he would "then press the police for even more arrests." (p. 81) The cycle of repression had many participants, to be sure, but in Thurston's analysis the original impetus comes from Ezhov and not Stalin. Stalin did not plan the Terror. Rather, "it was a reaction, however grossly exaggerated, to information he received on threats to himself and the USSR." (p. 58)

It is widely believed that the Great Terror was a time of fear and suspicion, a time when Soviet citizens watched their words, looked over their shoulder, and were anxious about an unexpected knock at their door. Rogovin generally supports this picture by claiming that Stalinist terror was directed at "unarmed people who were dissatisfied with the ruling regime, or who were being subjected to completely arbitrary violence." (pp. 316-17) To question the presence of fear, the result of this arbitrary violence, would be to question the very existence of terror, and this is exactly what Thurston seeks to do. He claims that Stalin did not plan a reign of Terror, the regime did not seek to rule by fear and, indeed, mass and pervasive fear did not exist.

Thurston argues that for the most part "terror was not the central fact or motivating factor of Soviet existence" between collectivization and the outbreak of WWII. (p. 164) Terror touched the Soviet elite, only a minority of citizens, while the average worker and collective farm peasant did not consider themselves victims of an oppressive regime or silenced into submission, but actually felt rather empowered, as their numerous complaints and petitions attest. Thurston claims that if anyone felt fear it was probably only those who were the apparent targets of repression, that is, high party officials, armed forces officers, writers, industrial managers, collective farm chairs, kulaks, former White Army officers and those with the wrong social origins. The arrests of the late 1930s were not far-ranging and random, but limited and selective, and "the scale of arrests and unnatural deaths under Stalin was not sufficient to induce general fear of the regime." (p. 232)

Moreover, in sharp contrast to Rogovin, Thurston diminishes the amount of discontent, disbelief, and disagreement that existed in the party and in society in the